

1: Arch Phys Med Rehabil. 2004 Sep;85(9):E25.

Poster 88 unsuspected mercury toxicity linked to neurologic symptoms: A case series. Deborah Saint-Phard, MD; Peter G. Gonzalez, MD (Univ Colorado Health Sci Ctr, Denver, CO); Pamela Sherman, MD, e-mail: peter.gonzalez@uchsc.edu.

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DISCLOSURE: D. Saint-Phard, None; P.G. Gonzalez, None; P. Sherman, None.

SETTING: Women's sports medicine clinic. Patients: 10 patients who presented with paresthesias and were found to have elevated serum mercury levels. Case Descriptions: A retrospective review of patient records was performed from October 2000 to May 2002. This study reports on a series of 10 patients who were evaluated with electrodiagnostic studies and laboratory analysis after presenting to a tertiary referral center with paresthesias. Assessment/Results: Serum mercury levels ranged from 27 to 96microg/L. 6/10 patients presented with paresthesias of the extremities. In 3 cases, there was no electrodiagnostic evidence of peripheral neuropathy. In 5 cases, there was electrodiagnostic evidence of mixed sensorimotor peripheral neuropathy with axonal loss. 6 patients reported fish consumption at least twice weekly, with 2 patients reporting fish consumption 7 days a week for several years. Only 1 patient reported possible occupational exposure to mercury. 1 patient had a medical history of hypothyroidism. No patient had a medical history of diabetes. Discussion: This case series suggests that there may be an adverse association between excessive fish consumption, mercury toxicity, clinical symptoms, and/or abnormal electrodiagnostic findings at serum mercury levels well below the previously defined neurotoxic level of 200microg/L. Conclusions: There is a need to define the effects of lower levels of mercury toxicity in regard to the clinical and electrodiagnostic presentation. Key Words: Mercury; Polyneuropathies; Rehabilitation.

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2: J Environ Health. 2004 Jul-Aug;67(1):9-14, 28.

Too much of a good thing (fish): methylmercury case study.

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Methylmercury is an environmental toxicant that has been shown to cause neurologic damage in both children and adults if ingested in sufficiently high quantities. Poisoning outbreaks in Japan and Iraq have revealed serious effects on developing fetuses at levels far below those that produced clinical signs or symptoms in the mothers. Therefore, health guidance values for methylmercury, such as the chronic oral minimal risk level (MRL) of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, have been set by governmental agencies at levels that would protect fetuses. Since adults are less sensitive than fetuses, chronic intakes within an order of magnitude of the MRL generally have been considered to represent no health risk to otherwise healthy adults. The present report of suspected mercury intoxication in a 53-year-old female suggests that some individuals might be susceptible to adverse health impacts of methylmercury at intakes just 7 to 15 times the MRL.

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